

**SYSTEM, COMPUTER PROGRAM PRODUCT, COMPUTING DEVICE, AND  
ASSOCIATED METHODS FOR FORM IDENTIFICATION AND  
INFORMATION MANIPULATION**

**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION**

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/127,196, filed March 31, 1999, the contents of which are herein incorporated by reference.

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**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates generally to data processing with pen enabled computing devices and, more particularly, to a system, computer program product, computing device, and associated methods for electronically identifying preprinted forms used in conjunction with pen enabled computing devices and accessing and manipulating information associated therewith.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

Pen-enabled computing is a relatively recent development wherein a user interfaces with a computing system by way of a writing stylus instead of a mouse or a keyboard. In some instances, a pen-enabled computing system provides an electronic writing tablet having an overlaid writing surface. Such a writing surface may comprise, for example, a blank sheet of paper or a preprinted form. The writing stylus, in turn, may comprise a device capable of inputting data (a "handwriting input") into the pen-enabled computing system while providing both a visible, or "written ink," copy of the data on the writing surface and an "electronic" copy of the

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data within the pen-enabled computing system. Such a writing stylus may comprise, for example, a conventional pen, a conventional pencil, a radio transmitter, a magnetic or electric field device, an ultrasound transceiver, or combinations thereof.

Once the electronic copy of the data is entered into the pen-enabled computing system, the data may be stored as an "electronic ink" copy, wherein the handwriting input is captured as written, typically as a sequence of (x, y) coordinate pairs, a bit map or the like, or as a "text" copy, wherein the handwriting input is captured, recognized, and translated into the corresponding text, typically by automatic online handwriting recognition or the like. In some instances, the pen-enabled computing system may be capable of producing both an electronic ink and a text copy of the handwriting input. Since the writing stylus is generally capable of providing a written ink copy of the handwriting input on the writing surface, the user is automatically provided with a hard copy, or visual feed back, of the entered data. It is understood, however, that a written ink copy of the handwriting input may not be provided in some instances, wherein the handwriting input is then just captured by the electronic writing tablet and stored in the pen-enabled computing system as an electronic copy. Examples of pen enabled computing devices include the CrossPad™ portable digital notepad by the A. T. Cross Company and the Palm Connected Organizer™ personal data assistant (PDA) by Palm, Inc.

One example of the capabilities of pen enabled computing devices is provided by U.S. Patent No. 5,629,499 to Flickinger et al., the contents of which are incorporated by reference herein. Flickinger describes an electronic board used to capture and store electronic ink data. According to Flickinger, a page having a writing surface is secured to the electronic board with clip. Pen input data is then entered by writing on the writing surface with a pen, wherein the writing is electronically captured by the board to create an electronic ink copy thereof. However, the electronic board is described by Flickinger as only being capable of recording pen input data for subsequent transfer of the pen input data to a processing device. Thus, there exists a need for a pen enabled computing device having the innate capability to process or otherwise manipulate recorded pen input data without having to transfer or otherwise interface with a separate or external processing device.

The Flickinger electronic board is also described as being usable with a blank piece of paper or a preprinted form, wherein a user-initiated operation indicates to the board that a page has been positioned thereon. A subsequent operation is then required to identify the page to the board. In one embodiment, the user must activate 5 a switch outside the writing area to identify the page. However, having a separate switch for indicating each type of form supported by the device limits the capabilities and form type capacity thereof while disadvantageously adding components to the device. Further, a toggle switch requiring multiple actuations in order to scroll through the list of form types supported by the device may be inconvenient and may 10 also limit the capacity of the device. Thus, there exists a further need for a pen enabled computing device having the capability to detect the presence of a page engaged with the device and to determine the type of form with a minimum of separate identification devices and required user-initiated operations.

Another embodiment of Flickinger describes a bar code imprinted on the back 15 of the page, opposite to the writing surface, wherein the bar code indicates the form identity. A complementary bar code reader is then provided on the electronic board to read the bar code and identify the form. However, the process of adding a bar code to each page used with the device undesirably adds printing expense and complexity since the proper bar code must first be determined to identify the type of form and 20 then a double-sided print or copy must be made such that the bar code is imprinted on the back of the page. In addition, the bar code reader disadvantageously adds components to the device. Thus, there exists a still further need for a pen enabled computing device having the capability of determining the type of form engaged therewith without requiring additional components and special modification of the 25 form to indicate the form type to the device.

In addition, another embodiment of the Flickinger device discloses a single small printed box provided on the form that must be checked by the user with the pen to indicate the form type. Accordingly, each form has a separate box disposed in a different position about the writing surface. Once a box is checked by the user to 30 identify the particular form being used, the identification data corresponding to the marked box must be transmitted to another computing device to identify the

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corresponding form type. However, having a dedicated box for each form type, with each box being disposed in a dedicated position on the writing surface, further limits the capacity of the device at the expense of the available area of the writing surface. This limitation is magnified if the form comprises multiple pages, wherein a separate  
5 box must be provided to identify each page of the form. In addition, this form type indicating system does not provide for the identification of multiple pages of a single form type. Thus, there exists yet a further need for a method of identifying a form to a pen enabled computing device that is capable of indicating form type while also uniquely identifying forms having multiple pages as well as multiple pages of a single  
10 form type and while occupying minimal space on the writing surface of the page. In some instances, it may be desirable for the pen enabled computing device to be capable of identifying the form without requiring dedicated identification boxes on the writing surface which must be specifically checked by the user.

Flickinger further discloses a device capable of receiving and storing pen input  
15 data which is then subsequently processed by a separate computing device. This device limitation may undesirably affect portability and the size of the device. Also, the combination of a remote processing device and a simple form identification process does not provide the capability for identifying a specific page on which future revisions or additions to the entered data can be expediently and efficiently performed  
20 by way of the corresponding form on the electronic board. The Flickinger form identification process has a further limitation in that accessing of previously stored data is limited to a general form type and does not allow the user to access a more focused data set such as, for example, data input into a specific field on a specific page of a certain type of form. More generally, Flickinger's inability to specifically  
25 identify the page being used with the electronic board may preclude a wide range of data manipulation processes that depend on the specificity and focus of a data set that can be sorted by a specific page identifier. Thus, there exists a need for a pen enabled computing device capable of specifically identifying the page being used therewith in order to facilitate future data modification, access, and manipulation in an efficient  
30 and expedient manner to provide "seamless" operation with minimal inconvenience and enhanced flexibility for the user.

Thus, there exists a need for a pen enabled computing device having the innate capability to process or otherwise manipulate recorded pen input data. It may also be desirable for the pen enabled computing device to have the capability of detecting the presence of a page engaged with the device and to determine the type of form with a minimum of separate identification devices and required user-initiated operations.

5 Still further, the pen enabled computing device should have the capability of determining the type of form engaged therewith without requiring additional components and special modification of the form to indicate the form type to the device. In addition, it would be desirable to have an associated method of identifying

10 a form to a pen enabled computing device that is capable of indicating form type as well as uniquely identifying forms having multiple pages and multiple pages of a single form type, while occupying minimal space, if any, on the writing surface of the page. In some instances, it may also be desirable for the pen enabled computing device to be capable of identifying the form without requiring dedicated identification

15 boxes on the writing surface which must be specifically checked by the user. Thus, there exists a need for a pen enabled computing device capable of specifically identifying the page being used therewith in order to facilitate future data modification, access, and manipulation in an efficient and expedient manner to provide "seamless" and automatic operation with minimal inconvenience and

20 enhanced flexibility for the user.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The above and other needs are met by the present invention which, in one embodiment, provides a system for identifying a preprinted form and interacting therewith. The system comprises a pen enabled computing device having a writing stylus, a preprinted form, and a computer program product. The preprinted form is cooperable with the pen enabled computing device and comprises a page having a writing surface, a visual form identifier disposed on the writing surface and adapted to identify the nature of the page to the user, and a plurality of fields defined by the

25 writing surface. The computer program product executes within the pen enabled computing device and cooperates therewith to determine the disposition of the writing

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stylus adjacent to the writing surface in order to actuate the pen enabled computing device. Subsequently, the pen enabled computing device is capable of detecting, capturing, and storing data input into the fields according to the nature of the page, wherein the nature of the page comprises a function and a specific identity. The  
5 nature of the page is also identifiable by the pen enabled computing device based on the data input into a plurality of the fields on the writing surface.

In some instances, the system further comprises an electronic handwriting tablet capable of interacting with a pen enabled computing device and the preprinted form so as to sense the position and movement of the writing stylus with respect to a  
10 page engaged with the handwriting tablet. In addition, the preprinted form may comprise a plurality of pages having a predetermined order such that a function and a specific identity may be determined for each page according to the order. To facilitate determination of the nature of the page, the fields may have predetermined spatial arrangement on the writing surface according to the nature of the page such  
15 that the pen enabled computing device detects and captures data input in a plurality of the fields to determine the nature of the page. Alternatively, data may be input into each of a plurality of the fields, wherein the pen enabled computing device and the computer program product cooperate to process the data-containing fields to define a corresponding base n number that uniquely identifies the nature of the page to the pen  
20 enabled computing device. For example, the pen enabled computing device may be configured to cooperate with the computer program product to define a base n number corresponding to a transposable matrix having n rows and m+1 columns, thereby forming an  $(n)*(m+1)$  matrix elements with each element corresponding to a field on the writing surface. Each matrix element thereby has a value corresponding to the  
25  $j*n^i$ , wherein i may vary from 0 to m and j varies from 0 to n-1. Therefore, the base n number may be, for example, the summation of the values of all of the elements within the matrix corresponding to field on the writing surface in which the user entered data. Once the nature of the page is determined, the pen enabled computing device may be further configured to enable access to other data stored therein that is  
30 associated with the specific identity of the page.

Once the nature of the page has been identified by the pen enabled computing device, data stored therein that is associated with and/or independent of the specific identity of the page may be accessed. In some instances, the data may be provided to the user via a user interface. Still further, after the nature of the page has been  
5 determined, the pen enabled computing device cooperates with the computer program product to determine whether data input into the fields continues to correspond to the determined nature of the page. The pen enabled computing device accordingly indicates an error if the input data fails to correspond. If an error is indicated, the error is indicated to the user via the user interface. As such, the user may thereafter  
10 be prompted to correct the error through the pen enabled computing device. In some instances, the user interface is further capable of indicating to the user the fields containing data, the data contained within the data-containing fields, and/or the number of fields containing data.

The computer program product generally cooperates with the pen enabled  
15 computing device to detect, capture, and store handwritten data input into a field with the writing stylus. The handwritten data are then spatially segmented such that the spatial segments correlate with the nature of the page. In some instances, the computer program product is further capable of assigning a stamp to data input into a field, wherein the stamp corresponds to the nature of the page and may comprise a  
20 time, a date, and/or a unique identifier. Thus, in some cases, the nature of a page may comprise a function, a specific identity, and a stamp.

The pen enabled computing device may further comprise an editing actuator, wherein the computer program product is capable of cooperating with the pen enabled computing device to edit the data upon actuation of the editing actuator. When the  
25 editing actuator is actuated, the computer program product may cooperate with the pen enabled computing device to allow the addition of data to data contained within a field, to allow insertion of data between data elements contained within a field, to allow deletion of data contained within field, and/or to allow replacement of data contained within field with alternate data. The computer program product may also  
30 be capable of determining whether data is being input into a data-containing field having a preassigned stamp. If this is the case, the user is prompted, through the user

interface, to verify that the user intends to edit the data within the data-containing field.

For further manipulation of data, the computer program product may be capable of cooperating with the pen enabled computing device to allow the exportation of data or importation of data in relation to an external computing device or within either of the pen enabled computing device and the external computing device. In such instances, the computer program product may be capable of reconciling the transmission of data corresponding to the nature of a page between the pen enabled computing device and the external computing device, within the pen enabled computing device, and/or within the external computing device. In such a system, the computer program product is capable of allowing the pen enabled computing device and/or the external computing device to access data corresponding to the nature of the page and to examine and otherwise manipulate data contained within the fields thereof. In some instances, the pen enabled computing device may cooperate with the computer program product to selectively direct data contained within a field to be converted into text by the pen enabled computing device and/or the external computing device upon actuation of a conversion actuator. Still more generally, the system may be capable of selectively converting data contained within a field into text.

Another aspect of the present invention comprises a computer program product adapted to execute within a pen enabled computing device having a writing stylus and to identify the nature of a preprinted form to the pen enabled computing device, wherein the form comprises a page having a writing surface defining a plurality of fields and the nature of the page comprises a function and a specific identity. The computer program product generally comprises a number of executable portions executing within the pen enabled computing device. More specifically, the computer program product may comprise a first executable portion for determining the disposition of the writing stylus adjacent to the writing surface such that the writing stylus is capable of interacting with the fields in order to actuate the pen enabled computing device. A second executable portion directs the pen enabled computing device to detect, capture, and store data input into the fields with the

writing stylus, wherein the data is input according to the nature of the page. A third executable portion identifies the nature of the page to the pen enabled computing device based upon data input into a plurality of the fields.

In some instances, the computer program product is adapted to facilitate  
5 interaction between the pen enabled computing device and an electronic handwriting tablet capable of sensing position and movement of the writing stylus with respect to a page engaged therewith. Where the form comprises a plurality of pages having a predetermined order, the computer program product may further comprise a fifth executable portion for determining a function and a specific identity for each page  
10 according to the order. Further, the fields may have a predetermined spatial arrangement on the writing surface according to the nature of the page such that the second executable portion of the computer program product detects and captures data input in a plurality of the fields to enable the pen enabled computing device to determine the nature of the page. Alternatively, data may be input into each of a  
15 plurality of the fields, wherein the computer program product then processes the data-containing fields to define a corresponding base n number that uniquely identifies the nature of the page to the pen enabled computing device. For example, the pen enabled computing device may be configured to cooperate with the computer program product to define a base n number corresponding to a transposable matrix having n  
20 rows and m+1 columns, thereby forming an  $(n)*(m+1)$  matrix elements with each element corresponding to a field on the writing surface. Each matrix element thereby has a value corresponding to the  $j*n^i$ , wherein i may vary from 0 to m and j varies from 0 to n-1. Therefore, the base n number may be, for example, the summation of the values of all of the elements within the matrix corresponding to field on the  
25 writing surface in which the user entered data.

After the nature of the page has been determined, the fourth executable portion may also access data stored within the pen enabled computing device, wherein the data may be with and/or be independent of the specific identity of the page. Where the pen enabled computing device further comprises a user interface, the computer program product further comprises a sixth executable portion adapted to cooperate with the user interface to provide data to the user. The computer program product

may also comprise a seventh executable portion for determining whether data input into the fields continues to correspond to the determined nature of the page and indicating an error if the input data fails to correspond. In instances where an error is indicated to the user through the user interface, the seventh executable portion may 5 also prompt the user to correct the error through the pen enabled computing device. In other instances, the seventh executable portion may be capable of indicating to the user through the user interface the fields containing data, the data contained within the data-containing fields, and/or the number of fields containing data.

Further, the second executable portion of the computer program product may 10 detect, capture, and store handwritten data input into a field with the writing stylus by spatially segmenting the handwritten data and correlating the spatial segments with the nature of the page. In some instances, the computer program product may further comprise an eighth executable portion for assigning a stamp to data input into a field, wherein the stamp corresponds to the nature of the page and may comprise a time, a 15 date, and/or a unique identifier.

Once a page is sufficiently identifiable, such as by a function, specific identity, and/or stamp, the data may be accessed and otherwise manipulated. In some instances, the pen enabled computing device may comprise an editing actuator, wherein the computer program product further comprises a ninth executable portion 20 for enabling editing of data upon actuation of the editing actuator. The ninth executable portion may also be capable of adding data to data contained within a field, inserting data between previous data elements contained within a field, deleting data contained within a field, and/or replacing data contained within a field with alternate data. Also, the computer program product may further comprise a tenth 25 executable portion capable of determining whether data is being input into a data-containing field having a preassigned stamp and, if so, prompting the user, through the user interface, to verify that the user intends to edit the data within the field.

The computer program product may further comprise an eleventh executable portion capable of exporting data to and/or importing data in relation to an external 30 computing device or within either the pen enabled computing device or the external computing device. The eleventh executable portion may be capable of reconciling

transmission of data corresponding to the nature of the page between the pen enabled computing device and the external computing device, within the pen enabled computing device, and/or within the external computing device. The computer program product may further comprise a twelfth executable portion capable of

5 allowing the pen enabled computing device and/or the external computing device to access data corresponding to the nature of a page and to examine and otherwise manipulate data contained within the fields thereof. In some instances, the pen enabled computing device may further comprise a conversion actuator, wherein the computer program product also further comprises a thirteenth executable portion that

10 is capable of selectively directing data contained within a field to be converted into text by the pen enabled computing device and/or the external computing device upon actuation of the conversion actuator. Still more generally, the computer program product may further comprise a fourteenth executable portion capable of selectively converting data contained with a field into text.

15 Yet another aspect of the present invention comprises a pen enabled computing device adapted for use with a preprinted form, the preprinted form comprising a page having a writing surface, a visual form identifier disposed on the writing surface and adapted to identify the nature of the page to a user, and a plurality of fields defined by the writing surface and arranged to correspond to the nature of the page, further wherein the nature of the page generally comprises a function and a specific identity. Such a pen enabled computing device comprises a writing stylus and a sensing device, wherein the sensing device is adapted to engage the preprinted form and cooperates with the writing stylus such that the pen enabled computing device is actuated when the writing stylus is disposed adjacent to the writing surface

20 in interactable relation with the fields, thereby enabling the pen enabled computing device to determine the nature of the page as data is input into the fields with the writing stylus according to the user-identified nature of the page.

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The sensing device may comprise an electronic handwriting tablet adapted to engage the preprinted form and capable of sensing position and movement of the writing stylus with respect to the page. In some instances, the pen enabled computing device may be configured to be capable of determining the nature of a form

comprising a plurality of pages having a predetermined order where each page has a function and specific identity corresponding to the order. In order to determine the nature of the page, the pen enabled computing device may be configured to require data to be input into a plurality of the fields in order to determine the nature of the page therefrom, wherein the fields have a predetermined spatial arrangement on the writing surface according to the nature of the page. Alternatively, the pen enabled computing device may be configured to define a base n number that uniquely identifies the nature of the page from the data input into each of a plurality of the fields. For example, the pen enabled computing device may be configured to cooperate with the computer program product to define a base n number corresponding to a transposable matrix having n rows and m+1 columns, thereby forming an  $(n)*(m+1)$  matrix elements with each element corresponding to a field on the writing surface. Each matrix element thereby has a value corresponding to the  $j*n^i$ , wherein i may vary from 0 to m and j varies from 0 to n-1. Therefore, the base n number may be, for example, the summation of the values of all of the elements within the matrix corresponding to field on the writing surface in which the user entered data. Once the nature of the page is determined, the pen enabled computing device may be further configured to enable access to other data stored therein that is associated with the specific identity of the page.

A still further aspect of the present invention comprises a method for identifying the nature of a page of a preprinted form with a pen enabled computing device having a writing stylus and interacting therewith. Generally, the nature of the page comprises a function and a specific identity, wherein the page further has a writing surface, a visual form identifier disposed on the writing surface and adapted to identify the nature of the page to a user, and a plurality of fields defined by the writing surface. Such a method comprises determining the disposition of the writing stylus adjacent to the writing surface such that the writing stylus is capable of interacting with the fields and actuating the pen enabled computing device, receiving data into the fields via the writing stylus and according to the nature of the page, determining the nature of the page from a plurality of the fields in which data is received, and identifying the nature of the page to the pen enabled computing device.

In some instances, the method may further comprise allowing access to other data stored within the pen enabled computing system, wherein the data may be associated with and/or independent of the specific identity of the page. Where the form comprises a plurality of pages having a predetermined order, the method may 5 also further comprise determining a function and specific identity for each page corresponding to the order. In some cases, the fields may be defined by the writing surface according to a predetermined spatial arrangement, wherein the method then further comprises determining the nature of the page from the spatial arrangement of the plurality of the fields in which data is received. Alternatively, the method may 10 comprise determining the nature of the page from a plurality of the fields in which data is received, wherein the data input into each of the plurality of the fields is processed to define a base n number uniquely corresponding to the nature of the page. Accordingly, the input data may be determined by sensing the position and movement of a writing stylus with respect to a page with an electronic handwriting tablet 15 engaged with the page.

The method may also comprise providing data to the user via a user interface, wherein the user interface is cooperable with the pen enabled computing device. After the nature of the page has been identified to the pen enabled computing device, the method may also comprise determining whether data input into the fields 20 continues to correspond to the determined nature of the page and indicating an error if the input data fails to correspond. In such instances, the method may further comprise indicating an error to the user through the user interface and prompting the user to correct the error using the pen enabled computing device. The user interface may also be configured such that the method may further comprise indicating to the user the 25 fields containing data, the data contained within the data-containing fields, and/or the number of fields containing data.

In addition, the method may comprise detecting, capturing, and storing handwritten data input into a field with the writing stylus by spatially segmenting the handwritten data and correlating the spatial segments with the nature of the page. In 30 some instances, the method may also comprise assigning a stamp to data input into a field, wherein the stamp corresponds to the nature of the page and comprises a time, a

date, and/or a unique identifier. Where data may be edited, the method may further comprise actuating an editing actuator in order to enable the pen enabled computing device to edit the data. After actuating the editing actuator, the pen enabled computing device may also be enabled to add data to data contained within a field,

5 insert data between data elements contained within a field, delete data contained within a field, and replace data contained within a field with alternate data. In some instances, the method may further comprise determining whether data is being input into a data-containing field having a preassigned stamp and, if so, prompting the user through the user interface to verify that the user intends to edit the data within the

10 field.

Still further, the method may comprise enabling the pen enabled computing device to export data and/or import data in relation to an external computing device or within either the pen enabled computing device or the external computing device.

The transmission of data may also comprise reconciling the transmission of data

15 corresponding to the nature of a page between the pen enabled computing device and the external computing device, within the pen enabled computing device, and/or within the external computing device. Accordingly, the pen enabled computing device and/or the external computing device may have access to data corresponding to the nature of a page with the capability to examine and otherwise manipulate data

20 contained within the fields thereof. The method may also comprise selectively directing data contained within a field to be converted into text, wherein the method may generally comprise selectively converting data within a field into text.

Yet another advantageous aspect of the present invention comprises a method for converting handwriting into a machine-usuable format using a pen enabled

25 computing device having a writing surface and a writing stylus selectively communicable with the writing surface. First, the position and movement of the writing stylus with respect to the writing surface is detected by the pen enabled computing device to form a handwritten input. Bounding boxes are then defined around each stroke of the handwritten input. The handwritten input and the bounding 30 boxes are then stored in a machine-usuable format, thereby allowing the handwritten input to be edited by adding textual data to the handwritten input, inserting textual

data between adjacent bounding boxes, deleting at least one bounding box, and replacing at least one bounding box with alternate data.

Still further, detecting the position and movement of the writing stylus may further comprise sampling the motion of the writing stylus with respect to the writing surface so as to form a coordinate representation of each stroke of the handwritten input. In some instances, editing the handwritten input may comprise receiving an indication from a user that the handwritten input is to be edited and receiving textual input from a keyboard to form the textual data with which the handwritten input is edited.

Accordingly, editing the handwritten input may further comprise altering the coordinate representation of at least some strokes of the handwritten input in order to alter spacing of the at least one bounding box so as to insert the textual input between adjacent bounding boxes and/or replace a bounding box containing handwritten input with the textual input.

Yet still another advantageous aspect of the present invention comprises a system for converting handwriting into a machine-usuable format, wherein the system comprises a pen enabled computing device having a memory element, a writing surface, and a writing stylus selectively communicable with the writing surface. The system may also comprise a computer program product executing within the pen enabled computing device and cooperating therewith for detecting the position and movement of the writing stylus with respect to the writing surface to form a handwritten input, defining a bounding box about each stroke of the handwritten input, storing the handwritten input and the bounding box surrounding each stroke in the memory element in a machine-usuable format, and editing the at least one handwritten element to add textual data to the handwritten input, insert textual data between adjacent bounding boxes, delete at least one bounding box, and/or replace at least one bounding box with alternate data.

According to some embodiments, the computer program product may sample the motion of the writing stylus with respect to the writing surface so as to form a coordinate representation of each stroke of the handwritten input. Further, the pen enabled computing device may cooperate with the computer program product to receive an indication from a user of the handwritten input to be edited and also

receive textual input from a keyboard to form the data with which the handwritten input is edited. Accordingly, the computer program product edits the handwritten input by altering the coordinate representation of at least some strokes of the handwritten input in order to alter spacing of the at least one bounding box so as to  
5 insert the textual input between adjacent bounding boxes and/or replace a bounding box containing a handwritten element with the textual input.

Thus, embodiments of the present invention provide a pen enabled computing device having the innate capability of processing or otherwise manipulating recorded pen input data. Embodiments of the present invention also provide a pen enabled  
10 computing device having the capability of detecting the presence of a page engaged with the device and determining the type of form with a minimum of separate identification devices and required user-initiated operations. According to a particularly advantageous aspect, the user uses the form according to its identified function and does not otherwise have to independently indicate the nature of the form  
15 to the pen enabled computing device. Accordingly, embodiments of the present invention provide a pen enabled computing device having the capability of determining the type of form engaged therewith without requiring additional components or special modification of the form to indicate the type of form to the device. Embodiments of the present invention also provide an associated method of  
20 identifying a form to a pen enabled computing device, while indicating the type of form as well as uniquely identifying forms having multiple pages and multiple pages of a single type of form. Advantageously, such a method accomplishes the identification of the page to the pen enabled computing system while occupying minimal, if any, space on the writing surface of the page. Thus, embodiments of the  
25 present invention provide a pen enabled computing device capable of specifically identifying the page being used therewith in order to facilitate future data modification, access, and manipulation in an efficient and expedient manner to provide enhanced seamless and automatic operation with minimal inconvenience and enhanced flexibility for the user.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Some of the advantages of the present invention having been stated, others will appear as the description proceeds, when considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which are not necessarily drawn to scale, in which:

5       **FIGURE 1** is a schematic of a pen enabled computing system according to one embodiment of the present invention.

**FIGURE 2** is a schematic of a pen enabled computing device according to one embodiment of the present invention.

10      **FIGURE 3** is an example of a contacts form in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

**FIGURE 4** is an example of a daily schedule form in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

**FIGURE 5** is an example of a to-do list form in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

15      **FIGURE 6** is an example of a notes form in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

**FIGURES 7(a) and 7(b)** is a flowchart of a method of identifying a form and manipulating data associated therewith with a pen enabled computing device according to one embodiment of the present invention.

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**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION**  
The present invention now will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which preferred embodiments of the invention are shown. This invention may, however, be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey the scope of the invention to those skilled in the art. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout.

25      **FIG. 1** is a schematic of a system for identifying a form and manipulating associated information with a pen-enabled computing device according to one embodiment of the present invention, the device being indicated generally by the

numeral 100. The device 100 generally comprises a handwriting capture interface 200, a central processing subsystem 300, a user interface 400, a computer program product 500, and an external device interface 600. The handwriting capture interface 200 generally comprises an apparatus for sensing the movements of a writing stylus.

5 In this regard, the handwriting capture interface typically provides a digitized output that defines a number of (x,y) coordinate pairs, each of which defines a mark made by the writing stylus upon a writing surface. The writing stylus is typically a writing instrument which may be capable of creating visible marks upon a writing surface such as, for example, a blank or piece of paper 210 or a paper-based preprinted form

10 220. In a particularly advantageous embodiment of the present invention, the handwriting capture interface 200 comprises a writing stylus and an electronic handwriting tablet area. The stylus and the handwriting tablet are interfaced such that the position or motion of the writing stylus, corresponding to writing strokes, with respect to the handwriting tablet can be detected and captured by the device 100. The

15 stylus may interact with the handwriting tablet such that the position or motion of the stylus is detected when proximate to the tablet or, alternatively, in contact with the handwriting tablet through a writing surface, wherein the writing surface may comprise, for example, the paper 210 or form 220, a multiplicity thereof, or a surface integral with the handwriting tablet. In some instances, a handwriting tablet may not

20 be necessary if the position and motion of the writing stylus may be directly detected by the handwriting capture interface 200 or other components of the device 100.

At least partially driving the handwriting capture interface 200 is the central processing subsystem 300. The central processing subsystem 300 may comprise, for example, a central processor unit 320, non-volatile memory storage 340, and RAM storage 360. The central processing unit (CPU) 320 is generally capable of executing all computer processing activities required to support the device 100. Non-volatile memory resources 340 such as, for example, an EEPROM or a disk, are typically used for storing and/or executing a computer program product 500 as well as storing useful data such as, for example, electronic ink. Further, the RAM storage 360 is used for

25 30 loading and executing the computer program product 500.

The user interface **400** includes provisions for facilitating interaction between the device **100** and a user. The user interface **400** may comprise, for example, one or more buttons for initiating functions within the device **100** where, in some instances, the buttons may comprise a part of a keyboard or a keypad. The user interface **400** 5 may also comprise an apparatus for allowing the user to view displayed data or status information such as, for example, a viewing screen or monitor. In some instances, the user interface **400** may also include an audio mechanism such as, for example, a buzzer, bell, or other indicator or other devices capable of supporting voice interaction between the device **100** and the user. Still further, for example, a vibration 10 mechanism may also be used as an alert or acknowledgement indicator. Accordingly, the user interface **400** may be implemented in many different manners, combinations thereof, and/or in conjunction with different components of the device **100**.

The computer program product **500** generally cooperates with the central processing subsystem **300** to control the device **100**. The computer program product 15 **500** further drives the handwriting capture interface **200** to interface and cooperate with a writing surface. According to one embodiment, the computer program product **500** enables the device **100** to, for example, sense a plurality of fields associated with the paper **210** or the preprinted form **220**, wherein the function and specific identity thereof may then be electronically identified to the device **100**. The function and 20 specific identity of the form may also be referred to herein as comprising the nature of the form. While the handwriting capture interface **200** may be implemented with, for example, a piece of paper **210**, a form **220**, or a surface integral with the interface **200**, reference to the handwriting capture interface **200** will be made herein to an embodiment of the invention having a form **220** interacting therewith. It will be 25 understood, however, that this reference is for illustration only and such reference may include embodiments, otherwise mentioned herein as examples, as well as other configurations of a handwriting capture device consistent with the spirit and scope of the present invention.

Once the device **100** interfaces with the form **220** based upon the identified 30 function and specific identity thereof, the system is then able to act upon data entered in the fields associated with the form, the data comprising, for example, a handwriting

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input. In one advantageous embodiment of the present invention, the handwriting input is captured and stored by the computer program product **500** as a coordinate representation of the interaction of the writing stylus with the handwriting tablet. In particular, the handwriting capture interface provides a plurality of (x,y) coordinate pairs representative to respective marks made by the writing stylus upon the handwriting tablet. As described hereinafter, the central processing subsystem defines a bounding box around the (x,y) coordinate pairs that cumulatively represent a particular stroke. In this context, a stroke is generally defined as a continuous marking by the writing stylus beginning with the commencement of contact or other interaction between the writing stylus and the handwriting tablet and terminating with the removal of the writing stylus from the handwriting tablet. For example, a "c" is generally formed of one stroke, while a "t" is generally formed of two strokes. Once the nature of the form is determined from the input data, the computer program product **500** is capable of accessing other data that is associated and/or not associated with the specific identity of the form. In some instances, the data in the fields may also be altered or otherwise manipulated by the user. The computer program product **500** may further have the ability to stamp any data entries as they are entered into the system **100** with, for example, a time, a date, and/or another unique identifier. The device **100** is then able to process these data fields with respect to the stamp. As these functions are executed, the computer program product **500** also controls the user interface **400** such that information relevant to ongoing stylus or device **100** activities are displayed for the user. In one advantageous embodiment, the computer program product **500** may be capable of formatting, sending, receiving, reconciling, and interpreting messages flowing through the external device interface **600**. The computer program product **500** is described in more detail herein.

The external device interface **600** is in communication with the central processing subsystem **300** and enables the device **100** to communicate with external computing devices in a unidirectional or bidirectional manner. Generally, the communication is accomplished via a communications link **700** to an external computing device **800**. Accordingly, the external device interface **600** may be generic in terms of protocol and communication medium as is known to one skilled in the art.

The communications link between the device 100 and the external computing device 800 may be either direct or indirect connections via wireline or wireless devices. The communications link 700 may comprise a variety of external communications links as well as a combination of these links such as, for example, wired serial interfaces,  
5 wired parallel interfaces, wireline modems, wireless modems, LAN connections, and WAN connections.

One advantageous embodiment of a pen-enabled computing device 100 according to the present invention is shown in FIG. 2. A handheld computer component 110 such as, for example, a modified personal digital assistant (PDA) or a  
10 smart-phone provides most of the functionality of the device 100. Accordingly, the handheld computer component 110 comprises the central processing subsystem 300, the user interface 400, the computer software program product 500, and the external device interface 600 as shown in FIG. 1. The user interface 400 may include an interactive display 120, one or more control buttons 130, and a speaker 140. The  
15 external communications interface 600 may include a wireless transceiver (not shown) and an antenna 150. In addition, the handwriting capture interface 200 comprises an electronic handwriting tablet 230 that may be co-operable with, for example, a blank piece of paper 210 or a paper-based preprinted form 220. The electronic handwriting tablet 280 may be serially interfaced with the handheld  
20 computer component 110. A dual-mode writing stylus 290 is employed by the user to form visible marks on the paper-based preprinted form 220, wherein the motion and position of the writing stylus 290 are also detectable by the electronic handwriting tablet 280.

A pen-enabled computing device 100 according to the present invention may  
25 comprise many different combinations of components than the embodiment previously described. For example, an electronic handwriting tablet may be combined with a desktop personal computer, wherein the electronic handwriting tablet and the personal computer are physically connected via a wired interface and the personal computer is connected to a local area network (LAN). As another  
30 example, an electronic handwriting tablet may be combined with a laptop personal computer and a central server, wherein the electronic handwriting tablet and the

personal computer are connected via a wireless interface and the personal computer has a network connection to the central server via a LAN. The central server is further capable of communicating with various application servers. Thus, a pen-enabled computing device may be accomplished in many different manners consistent  
5 with the spirit and scope of the present invention.

In accordance with embodiments of the present invention, one purpose of the pen enabled computing device is to identify the nature of a form 220 engaged therewith. Several examples of forms are shown in FIGS. 3-6, wherein such forms 220 may include a contact list form as shown in FIG. 3, a calendar form as shown in  
10 FIG. 4, a to-do list form as shown in FIG. 5, and a general notes form as shown in FIG. 6. Other examples of forms include, for instance, a trip planner form, a memorandum form, an educational form, a training form, an insurance form, a healthcare form, an expense accounting form, and a wide variety of other forms consistent with the spirit and scope of the present invention.

15 As shown in FIG. 3, a particular contacts form 220 comprises a writing surface 222, at least one visual form identifier 224, and a plurality of fields 226 for receiving data via the writing stylus. The fields 226 are generally defined by a series of spatial coordinates so as to generally define a box configured to receive a data input therein corresponding to a particular function. For example, a field labeled  
20 "Address" is capable of identifying itself to a user and is expected to receive an input therein with the writing stylus corresponding to the address of a particular contact. Further, fields labeled, for example, "G" and "7" could indicate that the user wishes to store an entered record on the seventh page of all contacts having data within the  
25 "Name" field having the letter "G". Thus, for a given type of form 220, the fields 226 defined by the writing surface 222, along with the visual form identifiers 224, may combine to indicate a function of the form as well as a specific identity should the form comprise multiple pages or should there be multiple pages of one type of form.

30 Generally, the user interacts with the form 220 according to the user-identified function imparted by the visual form identifiers 224. The user then enters data within the separate fields according to the functions thereof. Typically, as the data is entered into a field, it is spatially referenced with respect to the box defining the field. For

example, data entered into a "Name" field may be referenced to the leftmost vertical boundary or possibly a combination of the leftmost vertical boundary and the lowermost horizontal boundary. Thereafter, data entered into an "Address" field may be referenced to the leftmost vertical boundary of the address box, which also

5 corresponds to the rightmost vertical boundary of the name field. Thus, it is understood that data entered into defined fields on a form according to the functions thereof may be spatially referenced so as to be indicative of the nature of the form

**220.**

**FIG. 4** shows an example of a daily scheduler form **228** which also includes a

10 writing surface **230**, at least one visual form identifier **232**, and a plurality of fields **234** defined by the writing surface **230**. The fields **234** of the daily scheduler form **228** are spatially defined in a different manner than the previous contacts form **220** as shown in **FIG. 3**. Thus, the fields for indicating the month and day in the daily scheduler form **228** may fall outside any of the fields defined by the contacts form

15 **220**. Conversely, certain fields in the contacts form **220**, such as the "Address" or "E-mail" fields may be spatially disposed away from the spatial reference points for the fields of the daily scheduler form **228**. Thus, it will be understood that spatial representation of fields disposed on a form can also serve to differentiate between different types of forms. In order to add more specificity to the identification of a

20 form, various fields may also be spatially disposed so as to define a unique code over other forms. For example, checking the appropriate fields on the daily scheduler form **228** for a month and day differentiates the particular form from daily scheduler forms for other days throughout the year.

As shown in **FIG. 2**, the pen enabled computing device **100** is particularly

25 adapted to interact with a form **220**, wherein entering data in fields on the form **220** with a writing stylus **240** provides both a written ink copy of the particular form in addition to an electronic ink copy detected, captured, and stored by the device **100**. In order to facilitate future access to and other manipulation of the data entered on a particular form **220**, the device **100** is configured to be capable of identifying the

30 nature of the form **220**, wherein the nature of the form comprises a function and a specific identity. According to one embodiment of the present invention, the nature

of the form 220 may be defined by a code corresponding to data entered into particular fields on the form 220. On the writing surface of the form, the particular fields may be disposed and configured so as to form a unique code depending on the particular fields in which data is entered. For example, the pen enabled computing device 100 may be able to define a base n number that indicates the nature of a particular form. For example, the pen enabled computing device may be configured to cooperate with the computer program product to define a base n number corresponding to a transposable matrix having n rows and m+1 columns, thereby forming an (n)\*(m+1) matrix elements with each element corresponding to a field on the writing surface. Each matrix element thereby has a value corresponding to the  $j*n^i$ , wherein i may vary from 0 to m and j varies from 0 to n-1. Therefore, the base n number may be, for example, the summation of the values of all of the elements within the matrix corresponding to field on the writing surface in which the user entered data. Thus, it can be seen that selecting a particular combination of matrix elements within the matrix provides a unique identifier which may be used to indicate the nature of the form and such defined coding may be appropriately scaled or otherwise altered to match the form type support capacity of the device 100. In this manner, the area occupied on the writing surface by the particular fields may be reduced or minimized since the number of fields required to produce a unique form identification code requires less area on the writing surface compared to specifically dedicated identification fields.

In addition, various other provisions can be used to enhance and/or supplement the nature of the form indicated by a particular combination of actuated fields. For example, the pen enabled computing device 100 may be configured to selectively apply a stamp to data entered within a particular field, wherein the stamp may comprise a time, a date, or some other type of unique identifier that may be further referenced by the pen enabled computing device 100. Alternatively, or in addition, the pen enabled computing device 100 may be configured so as to be capable of identifying the nature of the form based upon the spatial disposition of the fields defined by the writing surface. According to such embodiments, the pen enabled computing device 10 is capable of determining the spatial disposition of data

entered on the writing surface in comparison to the spatial references for particular fields for the various forms supported by the pen enabled computing device 100. That is, fields on different forms can be staggered or otherwise uniquely positioned with respect to other forms supported by the system so that each form has a unique combination of fields that can be automatically identified by the pen enabled computing system as the user enters data in one or more of the fields. In some instances, the identification of a unique combination of fields may be sufficient to indicate the nature of the form to the device 100.

The enhanced determination of the nature of the form according to embodiments of the present invention provides further utility in that future editing of the input data is facilitated as well as future editing of the particular paper-based form. In addition, error detection and correction are also facilitated. For example, according to one embodiment of the present invention, once the nature of the page has been defined by the device 100, data entered according to a particular spatial arrangement of fields is expected by the device 100. Accordingly, should the user enter data outside the defined field boundaries, the device 100 is capable of, for example, detecting whether the user has entered data outside of an expected defined field and may apply a spatial criteria to determine whether the data has been insignificantly entered outside the boundary of the field by the user. If the entered data is determined by the device 100 to have been entered by the user outside the expected fields corresponding to the nature of the page, the device 100 may alert the user with an alarm or some other user interface device and present the user with the opportunity to resolve the aberrant data. For example, the user could be asked to identify to the device 100 the user-identified nature of the page. Alternatively, the user could be presented with the opportunity to move the aberrant data to an expected field or given the opportunity to save the aberrant data as an incidental note not associated with a particular expected field. Accordingly, it is understood that such applied criteria may facilitate a variety of possibilities for resolving the misentered data as well as other data processing operations. According to other embodiments of the present invention, detailed identification of the nature of the page facilitates the indication of data to the user as the user is interacting with the device 100. For example, upon determining the

nature of the form, the device could display to the user any previous data entered into the corresponding fields, the nature of that data, or possibly the number of fields in which the data has been entered. Accordingly, the device **100** may also be able to determine whether the user is entering data in a field in which data had been  
5 previously entered. In detecting the situation, the device **100** may further be capable of alerting the user as to the presence of the previous data as well as given the user the opportunity to add to the data in the field, replace the data in the field, or abort the input of data into that particular field.

**FIG. 7A** and **7B** provide a flowchart of a method of identifying a form and  
10 manipulating information using a pen enabled computing device according to one embodiment of the present invention. Where the form is engaged with the pen enabled computing device **100** and the user proceeds to enter data within the fields on the writing surface, the device **100** determines the position and senses the movement of the writing stylus with respect to the writing surface (**block 1000**) and a text,  
15 receives, and stores the data entered into the fields of the page (**block 1010**). If the user is entering data into a field defined by a previous stamp, the stamp comprising a time, date, or other unique identifier (**block 1020**), the device **100** prompts the user to indicate whether the user wishes to proceed with editing the existing field (**block 1030**). If the user indicates that no editing of the current field is desired, the device  
20 **100** indicates an error message to the user (**block 1040**) and allows the user to select an alternate field on the writing surface or, for example, resolve a conflict in form types. However, if the user indicates that editing the entry is desired (**block 1050**), the device **100** allows the user to edit the data and then saves the edited data and assigns a new stamp to the field (**block 1060**). Alternatively, if the field had  
25 contained no previous stamp, the user would be permitted to input new data into the field which would be assigned a stamp following the completion of data entry by the user (**block 1070**).

After the data has been input into the field and a stamp assigned by the device **100**, the data is stored by the device **100** (**block 1080**). Depending on a variety of factors including the configuration of the device **100** and the type of form, the device **100** may then proceed to determine the spatial arrangement of the fields in which data

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was entered by the user (**block 1090**) and/or proceed to define a base n number based on the fields having a data input (**block 1100**). The nature of the particular page can then be determined (**block 1110**) and the device **100** is then able to verify that the data entered into the selected fields corresponds to the identified nature of the page (**block 1120**). Should the data not correspond to the nature of the page, the device indicates an error message to the user (**block 1130**) and further prompts the user to select a different field or resolve the conflict between form types. However, should the data input into the fields correspond to the nature of the page, the device **100** allows access to other data based on the nature of the page (**block 1140**) or according to a more focused search criteria specified by the user. Further, data including the data input by the user, the data contained within fields within the form, and other data associated with the nature of the particular page may also be provided to the user through the user interface (**block 1150**) such that the user is able to monitor the data status and to edit or otherwise manipulate the data associated with the particular page. However, it should be noted that, once the data has been captured and stored by the device **100**, that a variety of data manipulation functions are possible using the device **100** and/or an external computing device **800** according to the spirit and the scope of the present invention.

The present invention also provides a technique for seamlessly editing handwritten and/or textual data by means of a pen-enabled computing device **100** and a computer program product **500** executing thereon. In the embodiment in which a handwritten input is to be edited, the handwritten input is initially captured by the handwriting capture interface **200** which detects the position and movement of the writing stylus **290** with respect to the writing surface **280** of the pen-enabled computing device **100**. As described above, the handwriting capture interface **500** generally provides a sequence of (x,y) coordinate pairs that define respective marks by the writing stylus **290** upon the writing surface **280**.

The central processing unit **320** of the pen-enabled computing device **100** in conjunction with the computer program product **500** then define bounding boxes around each stroke. Typically, each bounding box is a rectangular box that includes at least a portion of the (x,y) coordinate pairs of the respective stroke with one x coordinate of the rectangular box defined by the smallest x of any of the coordinate pairs and the x coordinate of the rectangular box at a point defined by the largest x, with the y coordinates extending between successive baselines. In some instances, the bounding boxes may also have included in the definitions thereof a time variable which may affect the delegation of a stroke to a particular bounding box. While a bounding box is described herein in spatial terms as at least partially encompassing a single stroke, the boundary box can be defined differently in other applications, typically based on spatial or temporal characteristics of one or more strokes in order to bundle one or more strokes together as a unit for editing purposes.

In instances in which the handwritten input is arranged in multiple lines, the central processing unit **320** in cooperation with the computer program product **500** operating thereon also determines the baseline for each of the lines so as to provide a point of reference for the characters in the respective line. As known to those skilled in the art, the baseline typically corresponds to the lowermost portion of most alphanumeric characters, although several letters, such as p, g and j have lower portions that fall below the baseline. The baseline can be determined in various manners. For example, the user of the pen-enabled computing device **100** can place the baseline by dragging a baseline into the proper position, by positioning a baseline with repeated actuation of up and down arrow keys or any other like means. As known to those skilled in the art, baselines can also be determined based upon changes in a one-dimensional histogram in which the histogram axis corresponds to the y or vertical direction of the page that the user is writing upon. In this regard, the histogram includes counts for a number of y values that define the number of strokes that pass through the respective y value. Since the y values that have large counts generally correspond to lines of handwriting, a baseline is typically defined immediately below y values having large counts. Finally, if a lined page is placed upon the writing surface **280** such that the page **220** is positioned in a known

registration to the writing surface **280**, the central processing unit **320** can define the baselines in a spatial arrangement corresponding to the spatial arrangement of lines on the page **220**.

Regardless of the manner in which the baselines are determined, the

5 handwritten input can be edited by initially displaying the handwritten input to the user upon a display **400** associated with the pen-enabled computing device **100**. The user then selects an actuation position relative to the handwritten input, such as by positioning the cursor through the use of a mouse, stylus, a track ball or the like, relative to the display of the handwritten input. Depending upon the location of the

10 cursor relative to the bounding boxes that surround each stroke, the pen-enabled computing device **100** may shift the cursor position somewhat. In this regard, the central processing unit **320**, in cooperation with the computer program product **500**, determines if the cursor position is located within a bounding box. If the cursor position is located within one or more bounding boxes, the pen-enabled computing

15 device **100** determines the x coordinate of the center of the largest bounding box. If the cursor position is at an x position greater than the x position of the center of the largest bounding box, the central processing unit **320** shifts the cursor position to correspond to or be slightly larger than the largest x value associated with the bounding box, i.e., shifts the cursor to the right side of the largest bounding box.

20 Alternatively, if the cursor position has an x value that is less than the x position of the center of the largest bounding box, the central processing unit **320** shifts the cursor position to an x position that is equal to the smallest x value associated with the bounding box, i.e., shifts the cursor position to the left of the smallest bounding box. If, however, the cursor position is not within a bounding box, the cursor position need

25 not be shifted whatsoever.

The pen-enabled computing device **100** then determines the editing function based upon the user input. If text is being inserted, for example, the text may be input by means of keystrokes on the keypad or by a handwritten insert accomplished by further movement of the writing stylus **290** over the writing tablet **280** as described

30 above. If text is being inserted, such as by means of the keypad, the strokes that define the handwritten input to the right of the insertion are moved further to the right

by an amount equal to the size, in the widthwise direction, of the inserted text. In instances in which text is inserted by means of alphanumeric characters input via keypad, the central processing unit **320** determines the number of characters being inserted and the font of the characters and moves the bounding boxes containing the handwritten input to the right of the insert further to the right by an amount equal to the multiple of the number of characters being inserted and the font size of the inserted characters (hereinafter referenced as the width of the insert). In order to move the bounding boxes containing the handwritten input to the right of the insert to the right, the x coordinate value of each coordinate point within a bounding box on the same line as and to the right of the insert is increased by an amount equal to the width of the insert.

Similarly, a handwritten insertion is inserted by initially forming bounding boxes about the strokes that form the handwritten input. Thereafter, the bounding boxes around existing handwritten input on the same line as and to the right of the insert are moved further to the right by an amount equal to the width of the insert, which is defined in this instance as the difference in the smallest x value associated with the leftmost bounding box of the handwritten insertion and the largest x value associated with the rightmost bounding box of the handwritten insertion. As described above, the bounding boxes of the existing handwritten input that are being moved are altered by increasing the x coordinate of each coordinate pair falling within the bounding boxes by an amount equal to the width of the insert.

In addition to inserting text and/or a handwritten insertion, at least a portion of the existing handwritten input can be deleted and the remaining handwritten input moved so as to close up any gaps in the resulting handwritten input. In this regard, the central processing unit **320** effectively moves the bounding boxes surrounding the remaining handwritten input to the left by an amount equal to the width of the deleted bounding boxes, typically by reducing the x values of the coordinate pairs that fall within each of the bounding boxes of the remaining handwriting input. In either instance in which the editing involves the insertion or deletion of text or handwritten input, the central processing unit **320** can also wrap the resulting handwritten input as appropriate depending upon the predefined margins and the like. While the above-

described editing capabilities of the present invention relate to the editing of a handwritten input, a textual message that has been previously entered can also be edited, such as by inserting handwritten characters in the same fashion, if so desired.

By providing editing capabilities, the pen-enabled computing device 100 and associated methods of the present invention provide increased functionality by permitting a seamless editing of the textual or handwritten input with either additional text or handwriting and appropriately spacing the resulting data without requiring extensive input from the user. Thus, the editing function provided by the pen-enabled computing device and associated method of the present invention will be quite intuitive to a user and will produce a resulting message that is appropriately spaced notwithstanding the insertion and deletion of handwriting and/or textual data.

The embodiments described herein address instances in which a single computer program product cooperates with the pen enabled computing device to accomplish the functions and processes further described herein. In some instances, the computer program product may operate, communicate, or otherwise interact with other computer program products such as, for example, personal information management (PIM) software or Web-based PIM or organizer software. These separate computer program products may be executing on the pen enabled computing device or on an external computing device in communication with the pen enabled computing device. As such, in these instances, a myriad of possible embodiments exist for editing, transferring, or otherwise manipulating data related to the nature of a page as identified by the system, computer program products, pen enabled computing device, and associated methods as described herein. Thus, it is understood that manipulation of data with a plurality of computer program products executing within a single or plurality of computing devices may provide further associated embodiments of the present invention as outlined below which will remain consistent with the spirit and scope of the present invention. Examples of embodiments for such a system are as follows:

30           1.       Electronic ink based personal information management characterized by combinations of any or all of the below items:

- electronic ink representations of items (e.g., schedule, to-do, contact) are stored in memory on the device for later transmission to personal information management (PIM) software running on a personal computer or to a web based organizer.

5      - electronic ink items may be defined by placing forms on the device and spatially segmenting the handwriting which is produced on them (depends on page identification).

2.      PIM system for displaying, modifying, augmenting, exporting,  
10     synchronizing, insuring consistency with paper items, conditionally translating handwriting to text, and printing mixed electronic ink and text items using PC PIM software or Web based PIM software.

- electronic ink items as defined are displayed and can be modified by personal information management software on the personal computer or web based organizer. (items may be defined by segmentation depending on page id.)
  - items may be changed using personal information management software on the personal computer or Web organizer by standard techniques (e.g., keyboard and mouse editing, speech recognition, etc.)

15     - fields of the personal information management software on the personal computer or Web organizer accept and display both electronic ink and text

- when an item is changed on the personal computer or Web organizer, the personal information management software displays a message which recommends that the user print a page containing the item for his planner, or change the item on the device using the technique claimed below, in order to synchronize the handwritten version of the item with the electronic version
  - items may be imported and/or exported to and/or from traditional personal information management software packages

20

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● ●

- when an electronic ink item is to be exported to another package or database, an automatic on-line handwriting recognizer may be used to convert the item to a representation more suitable to the external package

5            - user configurable options may be set so that importing and/or exporting to and/or from other packages is automatic

- the user may be notified and required to resolve conflicts which may occur as a result of importing and/or exporting to and/or from other packages

10            - for schedule/calendar items, a message which indicates that a particular time slot has been reserved (e.g., "reserved") via handwriting may be exported to an external package. Such a message is sufficient in cases where the user wishes to keep the details of his appointments private from other external package users

- the personal information management software supports the printing of electronic ink based items, which may correspond to different views of information in the database (e.g., items which correspond to a certain period of time)

15            - the user may be notified and required to resolve conflicts which may occur as a result of synchronizing the database on the PECS with the PC or Web PIM database

20            - the PC PIM or Web Organizer software may or may not organize and display information in the same way as the paper and PECS software. For example, there may be a page labeled "A1" which is the first page of contacts whose last name begins with the letter "A." The PC PIM software may group all contacts whose last name begins with "A" together for display purposes. If a change is made on the PC PIM side to handwritten information, the PIM software can warn the user that a change to information written on page "A1" occurred. Similarly, the user can print information from multiple physical pages (e.g., print all of the contacts whose last name begins with "A"). This implies that physical page id is part of the record for a contact.

25

- use keyword button on PECS if the user wants to access database by other fields—e.g., company name. Could configure software to always try automatically recognizing certain fields.

- a page printed from the PC PIM software has its identifiers

5 highlighted by some means, so that the user knows which fields to activate in order to identify the page to the firmware. The PC PIM software may include a means for assigning a page identifier to a page printed from it. The printed page may have as its only electronic page identifier the fields corresponding to its identity. Electronic page identifiers can consist of cross-hatched boxes.

10 Location of box can be known by table lookup, using record value (if page id is part of item record) or other key value as index.

3. A system for making changes to electronic ink items on the PECS

- changes may be made to items (e.g., schedule, to-do, contact) by

15 tapping a special button on the device (e.g., a cancel button) either immediately preceding or immediately following the indication of the item (e.g., by drawing one continuous line through the item) “item” is meaningless without page id—segmentation into items depends on page id

- when an item is changed on the handwriting capture device, the

20 PECS display indicates which item was changed

4. A system for making changes to or augmenting machine usable items on the PECS and reflecting those changes or augmentations in the PC PIM or Web organizer

- when a change should be made to a machine usable item on the

25 device, it can be deleted and written on paper. PC PIM or Web organizer software can associate the deletion event with the production of new handwritten information and attempt to automatically recognize the new piece of information and replace the old information in the PC database with the new information. “New handwritten information” is associated with a particular page. Context for automatic recognition will depend on page id. Alternatively, the user can be asked to type (using the PC or Web access

device) the new information while viewing an image of the handwritten information. In either case, the user can be asked to confirm that the new information should indeed replace the old information in the PC PIM or Web organizer database.

- 5            - alternatively, the change can be made with buttons on the device or control mechanisms on the paper, for instance a keypad on a preprinted form
  - if text (previously entered, machine usable) exists in a slot, and the user ignores the audible warning and message on the display when he writes in the slot, once the handwriting is uploaded, it may be displayed by the PIM or
- 10          Web Organizer application in a balloon (bubble, tool-tip) near the slot when the cursor is placed near the slot
  - if text (previously entered, machine usable) exists in a slot, and the user ignores the audible warning and message on the display when he writes in the slot, once the handwriting is uploaded, it may be displayed by the PIM or
- 15          Web Organizer application in a nearby field (e.g., a field in a column labeled "additional notes")
  - if text (previously entered, machine usable) exists in a slot, and the user writes in the slot, he may be prompted after an audible warning as to whether or not he wants the handwriting to replace the machine usable text in
- 20          the slot. By hitting the "No" button, the user may mean that the handwriting should be ignored altogether, i.e., the user made a mistake by writing in said slot.
  - regarding modifications to a schedule page, because the device has the time and date available, handwriting in a slot before the time of an appointment can be treated as modifications to the appointment itself, whereas handwriting in a slot during or after the time of the appointment can be treated as notes about the appointment. Modifications to the appointment are reflected on the device and in the PC PIM or Web Organizer software after upload, and notes about the appointment are treated as specified above.
- 25          - pages printed from the PC PIM software may have holes on the right (equivalently, the printing is on the back side), so that they may be placed in a

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ringed binder alongside corresponding pages. For example, if the appointment schedule for a user is printed and placed alongside a schedule page for the same day, the user may make notes about the appointments on the right-hand schedule page which are captured by the PECS and treated accordingly by the  
5 PC PIM or Web organizer software, while viewing the details of the appointments on the facing page.

5. A system for retrieving and displaying items on the PECS in response to user input

10 - electronic versions of items may be displayed if available on the PECS, when the user places the pen above or on the item or in response to other activations of control mechanisms. Other information associated with the item may optionally be displayed (e.g., date assigned in the case of a to-do item)

15 6. A system for reflecting change to item in PC PIM or Web organizer on PECS and on paper

20 - when an item is changed on the personal computer, and the user changes the item on the device using the technique claimed above, the user may prefer to make a note or check a box or press a button indicating that an electronic version of the information is available for display on the device.

- when changing an item after tapping the cancel button as described above, the stroke that identifies the item to be changed may itself be the note that indicates that an electronic version of the item is available.

25 7. A system for changing the state of certain variables by using checkboxes associated with items

30 - a checkbox may be associated with certain items. Its state may be toggled when the pen is placed down in it (e.g., alarm on, alarm off; recurring to-do item on, recurring to-do item off).

- the state of a checkbox may be displayed when the pen is placed over or in it (e.g., alarm is on)

8. A system for managing electronic ink based to-do lists characterized by  
5 combinations of any or all of the below items:

- placing forms on the device which represent to-do lists with electronic form identifiers and visual form identifiers
- segmenting items in the to-do list based on their spatial location on the form

10

9. A system for interacting with to-do list items on the PECS

- holding the pen over or on some part of a to-do list item gives information about the to-do list item, e.g. pen on the item shows the date the item was assigned on the LCD

15

- marking an item as completed both electronically and on paper by checking a box associated with the item
- marking an item as recurring both electronically and on paper by checking a box associated with the item
- assigning a priority level to an item both electronically and on paper by checking a box associated with the item (e.g., numerical or high, medium, low)

20

- displaying on the LCD the identity of the to-do list form in use (e.g., "To-do list 11/29/98"). The identity may be defined by the date and type of form and indicated by the method claimed above

25

- on a to-do list, if it is assumed that the user writes items in sequence and does not skip an item or items, then the condition where the user has failed to correctly identify the page on which he is writing can be detected if the user writes in a slot which is greater than the next expected slot for the current software page. If this condition occurs, the user can be warned appropriately.

30

10. A system for interacting with to-do list items using PC PIM or Web organizer software

- personal information management software on the personal computer or web organizer software which allows combined ink and text to-do list items to be sorted and viewed by status (complete or incomplete)

5

- personal information management software on the personal computer or web organizer software which allows combined ink and text to-do list items to be sorted and viewed by priority (e.g., high, medium, low)

10

- personal information management software on the personal computer or web organizer software which allows combined ink and text to-do list items to be sorted and viewed by date assigned (Background: the handwriting capture device associates a date and time with every stroke. The date assigned can be defined as the date a to-do list item was entered on the list.)

15

- personal information management software on the personal computer or web organizer software which allows combined ink and text to-do list items to be sorted and viewed by date scheduled to be completed (The date scheduled to be completed can be defined as the date associated with a particular instance of the to-do list form.)

20

- personal information management software on the personal computer or web organizer software which allows combined ink and text to-do list items to be sorted and viewed by date completed (The date completed can be defined as the date the completed checkbox was checked, since the device associates a date and time with every stroke.)

25

- personal information management software on the personal computer or web organizer software which allows a table or tables of combined ink and text to-do list items to be displayed along with associated values such as priority, status, date assigned, date scheduled to be completed and date completed.

30

- personal information management software on the personal computer or web organizer software which allows subsets of combined ink and text to-do list items to be displayed, possibly along with associated information

defined above, based on dates (e.g., assigned, scheduled, or completed), i.e.  
daily, weekly, or monthly views

11. A system for managing electronic ink based address books or contact lists  
5 characterized by combinations of any or all of the below items:

- placing forms on the device which represent contact lists (see attached example) with visual form identifiers and electronic form identifiers
- segmenting items in the contact list based on their spatial location on the form, after the form has been identified by activation of the electronic form identifier

10

12. A system for interacting with contact list items on the PECS

- holding the pen over or on some part of a contact list item gives information about the contact list item, e.g., pen on part of the item shows the contact's birthday, which may have been entered using the personal information management software on the personal computer or web organizer software
- special boxes may be part of a contact list item, and may be used to indicate when certain events related to the contact occur, just by placing strokes in the boxes, because the device date and time stamps each stroke (e.g., I reach a certain point in the sales cycle with a customer, I check a box. I contact the customer, I check a box)

15

20

25

13. A system for interacting with contact list items using the PC PIM Software or Web Organizer Software

- by using the boxes claimed above, the personal information management software can display contacts which fall into date driven categories (e.g., here are the contacts you were in touch with least recently, here are the contacts you were in touch with most recently, here are all of the contacts with whom you were at a certain point in the sales cycle by the given date, etc.)

30

14. A system for displaying information from various databases by interacting with the forms based PECS and allowing separate navigation context and physical page context

5 - on devices which have more physical buttons than existing pen enabled computing devices, for example, buttons that allow the user to identify dates and letters of the alphabet, the user may rapidly access machine usable information by tapping those buttons, rather than first indicating page identifiers on the paper to access machine usable information. For example,  
10 by tapping the letter "A" in nearly any context, the device may display contacts whose last name begins with the letter "A," and allow the user to scroll through them.

15 - on the device of the previous paragraph, it may be useful to have a button whose meaning is "return to the previous page identifier." For example, if a user is scheduling an appointment, wants to look up a name in the contacts database by tapping a button, then return to the appointment scheduling task on the current physical page, he returns by tapping said button. Alternatively, the physical paper context may not change as a result of changing the navigation context, that is, all handwriting is associated with the  
20 physical paper context.

25 - on such devices, it may be useful to always identify pages by writing on the paper, and use the extra buttons for navigation through the PIM database. In this case, the "OK" button could mean "return to (e.g., display) the context where the user was writing." Alternatively, the current paper context could be continuously displayed along with the current "navigation" context, when the two are different. The default is for the "paper context" and "navigation" contexts to be the same and be indicated by the page change operation.

30 - when the user is using a particular page, and the page context is the same as the navigation context, the page forward and page backward buttons of the PECS allow navigation through the machine usable items corresponding

to that page or page type, if the current page is not a notes page. The page forward and page backward buttons also allow navigation through the items corresponding to the navigation context, if it is different from the page context.

5 - Aids for navigation through machine usable data of the type corresponding to a particular page can be printed on the paper. For example, a page of contacts might include a "previous" box, a "next" box, a "name" box, a "phone" box, a "fax" box, and an "e-mail" box. Tapping the "next" box with the pen shows the next contact in machine usable form corresponding to  
10 the current page in alphabetical order. Tapping the "fax" and "e-mail" boxes would display the fax number and e-mail address for that contact.

15. A system for providing games for user familiarization, training, entertainment and education: Operation and State Identification

15 In order to prepare and train the user to make marks in boxes on the paper to identify pages and navigate through machine usable data, games which require the user to touch certain parts of the paper after a prompt can be included. A game modeled after "Operation" is one example. After the "Operation" page is identified, the display shows the name of a bone. The user must place the pen in the box  
20 corresponding to the bone within a certain amount of time or a negative, low frequency sound is heard. Another example is a state identification game. A map of the United States is printed on the page. After the map page is identified, the name of a state is displayed and the state must be touched on the map within a certain period of time or a negative, low frequency sound is heard. There are obvious variations of  
25 these types of games. For example, a state capital name can be displayed and the corresponding state must be touched.

16. Trip meter application

Another personal information management application is a trip meter. A  
30 starting point and a destination could be touched on a map, and the driving distance, driving time, and/or flying time between the two points could be displayed.

17. Expense tracking

Expenses can be tracked using the PIM system. As long as the user writes down his expenses on the day they occur, they will be organized correctly by date for the expense reporting software automatically, because the device date and time stamps the writing.

18. A PIM system where user interface elements for controlling the state of the system are printed on the paper.

10 Thus, embodiments of the present invention provide a pen enabled computing device having the innate capability of processing or otherwise manipulating recorded pen input data. Embodiments of the present invention also provide a pen enabled computing device having the capability of detecting the presence of a page engaged with the device and determining the type of form with a minimum of separate

15 identification devices and required user-initiated operations. According to a particularly advantageous aspect, the user uses the form according to its identified function and does not otherwise have to independently indicate the nature of the form to the pen enabled computing device. Accordingly, embodiments of the present invention provide a pen enabled computing device having the capability of

20 determining the type of form engaged therewith without requiring additional components or special modification of the form to indicate the type of form to the device. Embodiments of the present invention also provide an associated method of identifying a form to a pen enabled computing device, while indicating the type of form as well as uniquely identifying forms having multiple pages and multiple pages

25 of a single type of form. Advantageously, such a method accomplishes the identification of the page to the pen enabled computing system while occupying minimal, if any, space on the writing surface of the page. Thus, embodiments of the present invention provide a pen enabled computing device capable of specifically identifying the page being used therewith in order to facilitate future data

30 modification, access, and manipulation in an efficient and expedient manner to

provide enhanced seamless and automatic operation with minimal inconvenience and enhanced flexibility for the user.

Many modifications and other embodiments of the invention will come to mind to one skilled in the art to which this invention pertains having the benefit of the 5 teachings presented in the foregoing descriptions and the associated drawings.

Therefore, it is to be understood that the invention is not to be limited to the specific embodiments disclosed and that modifications and other embodiments are intended to be included within the scope of the appended claims. Although specific terms are employed herein, they are used in a generic and descriptive sense only and not for 10 purposes of limitation.